

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 06463 220828Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MARDID

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

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DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 6463

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TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJ: LABOR MOVEMENT MOVES TOWARD OPEN SPLIT

REF: (A) LISBON 6122 (DTG 081210Z SEP 76), (B) LISBON 6353

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SUMMARY: INTERSINDICAL HAS PUBLISHED PROPOSED RULES FOR A NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS, A MOVE THAT WIDENS THE SPLIT IN THE PORTUGUESE LABOR MOVEMENT ALONG POLITICAL LINES. THIS MAKES MORE LIKELY THE EVENTUAL CREATION OF A RIVAL SOCIALIST-SPONSORED
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PAGE 02 LISBON 06463 220828Z

CONFEDERATION OF DEMOCRATIC UNIONS. FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS

IN THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES UNION WILL BE HIGHLY IMPORTANT AND THE PS/PPD FORCES ARE OPTIMISTIC. END SUMMARY.

1. INTERSINDICAL PROPOSES STATUTES FOR LABOR CONGRESS:
THE PROVISIONAL ORGANIZING COMMISSION FOR THE INTERSINDICAL-SPONSORED "LABOR CONGRESS OF ALL UNIONS" HAS PUBLISHED A SET OF PROPOSED RULES FOR THE CONGRESS. UNIONS HAVE UNTIL OCT 13 TO COMMENT. A FURTHER MEETING WILL BE HELD OCT 16-17 TO APPROVE THE FINAL VERSION OF THE RULES AND TO DECIDE ON A DATE FOR THE CONGRESS.

2. THE PROVISIONAL ORGANIZING COMMISSION WAS ESTABLISHED AT A NATIONAL INTERSINDICAL MEETING HELD IN LISBON SEPT 4 (REF A). IT HAS MADE A MAJOR EFFORT TO CREATE THE ILLUSION THAT THE INTERSINDICAL CONGRESS WILL INDEED BE OPEN TO THE PARTICIPATION OF ALL PORTUGUESE UNIONS UNDER DEMOCRATIC CONDITIONS. VARIOUS VERSIONS OF THE PROJECTED RULES ARE PROPOSED FOR THE UNIONS' CONSIDERATION. ALL THE TEXTS HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON -- THEY FACILITATE THE CONTROL OF THE CONGRESS BY THE PCP.

3. NAME CHANGE: THE PROVISIONAL ORGANIZING COMMISSION ALSO CHANGED THE NAME OF THE INTERSINDICAL-SPONSORED CONGRESS FROM THE "CONGRESS OF ALL PORTUGUESE UNIONS FOR THE RESTRUCTURING OF INTERSINDICAL" TO THE LESS PRECISE "CONGRESS OF ALL PORTUGUESE UNIONS." THIS IS A MOVE OBVIOUSLY CALCULATED TO CONFUSE THE WORKERS AS INTERSINDICAL APPROPRIATED THE EXACT LANGUAGE USED BY THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONS TO PROMOTE A LABOR CONGRESS ORGANIZED ON THE BASIS OF PARITY BETWEEN INTER-SINDICAL AND NON-AFFILIATED UNIONS.

4. COMMENT: THE NET EFFECT OF THE INTERSINDICAL INITIATIVE IS TO WIDEN THE SPLIT IN THE PORTUGUESE LABOR MOVEMENT. THE UNIONS OPPOSING PCP DOMINATION OF INTERSINDICAL, COMMONLY IDENTIFIED AS THE "DEMOCRATIC" OR "OPEN LETTER" (CARTA ABERTA) GROUP HAVE REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE MINORITY POSITIONS SET ASIDE FOR THEM BY INTERSINDICAL'S PROVISIONAL ORGANIZING COMMISSION AND HAVE REJECTED PARTICIPATION IN ANY LABOR CONGRESS ORGANIZED BY INTERSINDICAL.

CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 LISBON 06463 220828Z

5. MARIO SOARES HAS TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT SOCIALIST LEADERS BELIEVE AN OPEN BREAK IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT IS PROBABLE. PELAGIO MADUREIRA, THE LABOR ADVISOR TO THE PRIME MINISTER, TOLD LABATT SEPT 17 THAT THE SOCIALISTS ARE PRIVATELY CONSIDERING STARTING A SECOND LABOR CONFEDERATION "IF IT IS CLEAR THAT INTERSINDICAL IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DIVIDING THE LABOR MOVEMENT." MADUREIRA ANTICIPATED THAT

THE NEW CONFEDERATION WOULD INCLUDE NEARLY ALL NON-COMMUNIST UNIONS. IN ADDITION, MOST OF THE APPROXIMATELY 150 SMALL UNIONS PRESENTLY UNIDENTIFIED WITH EITHER INTERSINDICAL OR THE "CARTA ABERTA" GROUP ARE CONSIDERED TO BE NON-COMMUNIST AND WE EXPECTED THEM TO RALLY TO A DEMOCRATIC CONFEDERATION ONCE IT IS ESTABLISHED.

6. MEANWHILE, CONTESTS BETWEEN THE PCP AND DEMOCRATIC SLATES FOR THE LEADERSHIP OF INDIVIDUAL UNIONS ARE CONTINUING. THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES UNION, STILL IN FORMATION, IS SCHEDULED TO HOLD NATIONAL ELECTIONS DURING OCTOBER. WITH 300,000 POTENTIAL MEMBERS, THIS UNION SHOULD BE ONE OF THE LARGEST AND MOST INFLUENTIAL UNIONS IN PORTUGAL. THE SOCIALISTS AND THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD) HAVE TACITLY AGREED TO COOPERATE IN THESE ELECTIONS. THEY ARE OPTIMISTIC IN REGARD TO THE PROBABLE OUTCOME IN THE NORTHERN AND CENTRAL REGIONS, AND LESS HOPEFUL IN THE SOUTHERN REGION, WHICH INCLUDES LISBON. DECISIVE ELECTION CHALLENGES TO THE PCP ARE ALSO DUE IN THE HOTEL WORKERS UNION AND THE AVEIRO TRANSPORT WORKERS UNION. THE FACT THAT CONTROL OF THE LABOR UNIONS IS INCREASINGLY A CONTROVERSIAL POLITICAL ISSUE SHOULD STIMULATE PUBLIC INTEREST AND ENCOURAGE WORKER PARTICIPATION IN UNION ELECTIONS - IMPORTANT PLUSES FOR THE DEMOCRATIC UNIONS.
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